

IPLAI Discussion Group Proposal

Title: *Attention & Intentionality: Power, Performance, Cognition and Wellbeing*

Abstract: From the rise in diagnoses of Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) to the fascination with wellness and self-realization, the concept and mediation of attention is at the center of theoretical and individual concerns today. In business and technology, the domains of user experience, marketing and behavior design rely on businesses' ability to curate and direct users' attention; in education and psychology, the diagnostic of short-spanned, deficient attention is generalized to contemporary Western culture as a whole, while attentional training through mindfulness meditation has found a new impulse; in art, the ability to mediate attention and the regimes of power, passivity, and prestige on which it depends are both the mechanism and the theme of many contemporary pieces. This reading and working group endeavours to approach the concept of attention from a distinctly interdisciplinary framework, linking artistic, humanist, and cognitive considerations of the concept in order to construct a critical praxis by which attention may be more fully apprehended and engaged.

Keywords: Attention, social mediation, embodiment, executive functioning, behavior design, resource allocation, regimes of attention, mindfulness, information age, histories of attention, self-optimization, regimes of power, scales of attention (collective to individual).

Text/media proposals:

Week 1: Attention Deficit, Mindfulness and Meaning in the Information Age

- Boot, N., Nevicka, B., & Baas, M. (2017). Subclinical symptoms of attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) are associated with specific creative processes. *Personality and Individual Differences, 114*, 73-81.
- Rose, N. (2007). Governing the Will in a Neurochemical Age. In *On Willing Selves* (pp. 81-99): Palgrave Macmillan UK.
- Brown, K. W., & Ryan, R. M. (2003). The benefits of being present: Mindfulness and its role in psychological well-being. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 84*(4), 822-848.

Week 2: Attention Mediation and Narratives of Success, Creativity and Wellbeing

- Prussia, G. E., Anderson, J. S., & Manz, C. C. (1998). Self-leadership and performance outcomes: The mediating influence of self-efficacy. *Journal of organizational behavior, 523-538*.
- Bandura, A. (1991). Social cognitive theory of self-regulation. *Organizational behavior and human decision processes, 50*(2), 248-287.
- Karoly, P. (1993). Mechanisms of self-regulation: A systems view. *Annual review of psychology, 44*(1), 23-52.

Week 3: A Brief History of Attention

- Hagner, M. (2003). Toward a History of Attention in Culture and Science. *Mln, 118*(3), 670-687. doi:10.1353/mln.2003.0054
- Kett, J. F. (1994). *The pursuit of knowledge under difficulties: From self-improvement to adult education in America, 1750-1990*. Stanford University Press.

Week 4: Art and Attention, Body and Performance Art, Power

- Mendelsohn, G. A. (1976). Associative and attentional processes in creative performance. *Journal of Personality, 44*, 341-369.
- *HBO Documentary Films ; Submarine Deluxe ; A Show of Force ; produced by Jeff Dupre, Maro Chermayeff ; directed by Matthew Akers. (2012). Marina Abramović : the artist is present. Chicago, Ill. :Music Box Films,*
- Wilson, S. (2002). *Information arts: intersections of art, science, and technology*. MIT press.
- Schechner, R. (2017). *Performance studies: An introduction*. Routledge.

Week 5: Economies of Attention, Gamification, Marketing and Consumer Behavior

- Nord, W. R., & Peter, J. P. (1980). A behavior modification perspective on marketing. *The Journal of Marketing*, 36-47.
- Davenport, T. H., & Beck, J. C. (2001). *The attention economy: Understanding the new currency of business*. Harvard Business Press.
- James, F., & English, J. F. (2009). *The economy of prestige: Prizes, awards, and the circulation of cultural value*. Harvard University Press.
- Franck, G. (2002). The scientific economy of attention: A novel approach to the collective rationality of science. *Scientometrics*, 55(1), 3-26. Retrieved from <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1023/A%3A1016059402618>.

Week 6: Putting it Into Practice: Attention, Intention, and Daily Life

- Brown, K. W., & Kasser, T. (2005). Are psychological and ecological well-being compatible? The role of values, mindfulness, and lifestyle. *Social Indicators Research*, 74(2), 349-368.
- Aronson, S., News. (n.d.). Divided Attention and the Search for Self, from [http://gurdjoeffclub.com/en/Divided Attention and the Search for Self 882](http://gurdjoeffclub.com/en/Divided%20Attention%20and%20the%20Search%20for%20Self%20882)

Seminar Leader Information

Ty Cary. Ty is a fourth year honours anthropology student. He takes interest in the project of utilizing the field as a site of self-knowledge, where his studies focus on considering the poetic, existentialist, and ecological registers of human experience alongside each other. Most recently his thesis research has explored an online community, *LoneCore*, where users share images representative of a 'lonely' aesthetic; he herein seeks to elucidate the ways in which people discover spirituality, healing, and belonging in urban modernity. In a personal capacity, Ty hopes to engage with this IPLAI group as a platform for considering the role of attention in his own life, not only individually, but more importantly, alongside the disparate realms of knowledge held by others. Ty has worked with the Anthropology Students' Association during his time at McGill, the organization will be supporting his presence in IPLAI. He can be reached by email at ty.cary@mail.mcgill.ca and by phone at (514) 791-4413.

Iris Rapoport. Iris is an undergraduate student in the Philosophy and Psychology departments. She is currently exploring the intersections between psychopathology and computational cognitive science on the one hand, aesthetics, technology and embodiment on the other. Iris is particularly interested in the ways in which the modulation of attention affects experiences of meaning, presence, and spirituality. She believes this group would address a need for spaces of open collaboration and exchange on fundamentally interdisciplinary topics of research, which she has found scarce during her time at university. She can be reached at iris.rapoport@mail.mcgill.ca.

Proposed meeting times: Mondays at 4:30 p.m.-6:30 p.m. Specific Dates: January 29th, February 12th, February 26th, March 12th, March 26th, April 9th